



Pacific Link
HOUSING

PACIFIC LINK POST

Your tenant newsletter



Westfield Working Bee

Winter 2021

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From the CEO's desk

It has been quite a busy few months and I am pleased to report that we have now resumed our tenant activities. Staff have loved reconnecting with tenants and look forward to continuing these at a different location each month.

A reminder that PLH offers a number of other tenant programs which you can apply for online. These include laptop loans, learner driver courses and the SHEW program for young tenants to take part in sports activities. Our Education Scholarship program closes at the end of the month and can fund items to assist with your studies. If you are interested, visit our website or give us a call for more information.

You should have received our Annual



Tenant Survey in the mail recently. We would appreciate you taking the time to provide your feedback before the 23rd June. It is so important for us to understand what we are doing well and what we can improve on. Thanks to everyone who has completed it so far.

Ian Lynch - CEO



PLH staff, tenants and Liesl Tesch MP



Staff from PLH, Coast Shelter and Health on The Streets (HoTS)

Tenant BBQ Lunch

It was great to connect with some of our tenants again at our first official BBQ since COVID-19! We organised the get together at one of our complexes on the Peninsula and plan to visit a different area each month.

We had a surprise visit from Liesl Tesch MP who popped in to say hello on the day. A few of our support partners also joined us which was really good to see. Coast Shelter generously volunteered to cook the BBQ, Health on the Streets (HoTS) offered free health check-ups and our friends from NEAMI and Central Coast Health also came along to meet PLH staff and tenants.

Now that COVID-19 has settled slightly, we are really looking forward to getting out on the road again and catching up with tenants, particularly those who live in the northern regions who we don't get to see as much. We will be in touch when we are visiting your area!

If you are interested in our tenant activities, feel free to contact Lynn on programs@pacificlink.org.au. We are always open to new ideas from our tenants!

Celebrating Two Staff Milestones

In May, we celebrated the very special milestones of two of our Michelles!

Our receptionist Kochie (who most of us know) has been with PLH for 15 years now. She started back at the "old old office" which was a little cottage in William Street. She has loved being part of Pacific Link's growth over the years. Kochie's favourite part of her role is talking to people and helping them with inquiries. "I treat everyone like an extended family member who could be in a similar situation whether you are a tenant, homeless or a support service. It can be challenging and people can be frustrated with the housing system process."

Brucie is our Central Region Tenancy Coordinator and has just reached her 10 year milestone with PLH. She also started back at the "old old office" in William Street. She is

extremely adaptable and has had experience in different areas of the business including accounts, housing and admin. Brucie's favourite part of her role is helping and building relationships with our tenants and working with a great PLH team.

It is wonderful to see two highly valued staff members reach these milestones and to celebrate their commitment and dedication to PLH. Well done Kochie and Brucie!



Brucie

Kochie

Are your energy bills rising?

With the cold weather creeping in, it is a good idea to prepare for higher energy costs. There are lots of resources online with tips on how to keep your bills down. Have a look at the Energy & Water Ombudsman's website for some ideas and how to access support if you need to www.ewon.com.au

Overdue bills - If your bill is overdue and/or you receive a reminder, you should contact your provider. Don't ignore the notice. You should speak openly with your provider about what you can afford to pay. You can ask for extra time to pay, set up a payment plan, or to be assessed for their affordability program.

Payment plans - A payment plan is a formal arrangement between you and your provider. It can help you avoid late fees and disconnection.

Affordability programs - These are designed to protect you from disconnection and manage the arrears on your account by paying smaller amounts over a longer period. All energy companies must have an affordability program.

EAPA (Energy Account Payment Assistance) Vouchers - EAPA vouchers are also available to help pay an electricity or gas bill. These provide assistance in a crisis or emergency situation and are distributed by community organisations. Visit www.ewon.com.au to find a EAPA provider in your area.



Rebates - The NSW Government offers more than 70 rebates and savings to help ease the cost of living. These are available to some seniors, families or other lower income households. There is a simple six question survey on the Service NSW website which will determine your eligibility and show you how to apply. You can also visit a service centre to ask about these rebates.

Check your eligibility for Service NSW rebates at www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/cost-living

Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarships Round Two

A couple of our young achievers in the last scholarship round are making good use of their awards. Jasmine received a laptop and Adobe Photoshop as part of her scholarship and is continuing her art studies at high school. She loves colour and is passionate about Anime and hopes to have her own studio one day. We can't wait to see some of her artwork!

Bradley has autism and was awarded an iPad and noise cancelling headphones in his scholarship package. This has helped Bradley to further develop his communication

skills, which he is now using in a weekly program with his speech therapist. According to his Dad Geoff, the iPad will also be a great tool for Bradley as he is about to commence a work placement for three weeks and will use the iPad to make communication easier.

The Scholarship Program is open to school students and those undertaking tertiary studies. It can help to fund laptops, course fees or other education costs. Applications for round two are now open online.



The next round of Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarships closes on the 30th June 2021. Visit the PLH website to apply www.pacificlink.org.au/programs/

Visit from Federal Housing Minister

We were honoured to host the Minister for Housing Michael Sukkar MP and Lucy Wicks MP at our development which is currently underway on the Peninsula. Construction will be completed at the end of this year and will provide 12 one and two bedroom units. It is great to see government take an active interest and recognise the desperate need for more social and affordable housing.



*Ian Lynch, Minister for Housing
Michael Sukkar, Michael Boyd
(MARS Building) and Lucy Wicks*



Westfield Working Bee

PLH staff rolled up their sleeves with volunteers from Tuggerah Westfield to revamp a garden in one of our properties. It was a huge combined effort with everyone pitching in! Brenden from the Botanic Gardens provided us with some native plants, Treecorp Solutions donated the mulch and Westfield brought along lots of supplies including individual veggie gardens for each unit.

The revamp also included installing new kitchens, bathrooms, flooring and painting of the seven units. These upgrades were funded by a grant PLH received from the NSW Government to improve social housing properties and boost the State's economic recovery from COVID-19. This grant will enable us to make upgrades to 73 properties in total.

We are very grateful to Westfield for helping us to add these finishes touches to make the property more homely. Tenants will be moving in during June and we look forward to seeing their reaction to the beautiful garden area and newly renovated units.



COVID-19 Update for Tenants

PLH continues to monitor and respond to Government restrictions and recommendations on COVID-19. We are still following temporary protocols in an effort to keep everyone safe.

The NSW Government is currently rolling out a phased program to provide free vaccines to everyone in the state. We encourage interested tenants to talk to their doctor about whether they are eligible at this stage of the vaccination roll out.

We will continue to update you by post, SMS messages, email and in our newsletters. Latest information for tenants can be found at www.pacificlink.org.au/coronavirus



COVID-19 VACCINATION

Please be patient, be kind

Everyone who wants to get the COVID-19 vaccine will get it

HELP NSW STAY COVID SAFE

For more information visit nsw.gov.au

NSW GOVERNMENT

SHEW Program

PLH's SHEW (Sports, Health, Exercise and Wellbeing) Program helps young tenants take part in registered sport or wellness activities. If your child is aged between 5 and 17, you can apply for up to \$250 to cover the cost of registration fees, classes, sports uniforms or other approved activities. For eligibility requirements, visit our website at www.pacificlink.org.au/programs



Learner Driver Program

PLH's Learner Driver Program is open to tenants of all ages who meet our eligibility criteria. In partnership with the NRMA Safer Driving School, we can provide 10 free professional driving lessons to assist in obtaining your P's. The course teaches essential road safety skills, builds the confidence of drivers and also provides logbook credits approved by the RMS. Visit our website to apply online www.pacificlink.org.au/programs

Tenant Survey Closes on 23rd June

All tenants should have received a letter and SMS about our 2021 Tenant Survey. We would love it if you could complete the survey and share your feedback with us! If you have misplaced your copy, you can complete the survey online at www.communityhousing.org.au/PacificLink2021. You will need a username and password for this. Just call Kachie on 4324 7617 and she can provide you with these details.



By completing the tenant survey, you will go into a prize draw to

WIN
A \$50
GIFT CARD

Garden Workshops

Everyone did a fantastic job creating their own succulent pot plants at our recent garden workshops... we have some very creative tenants at PLH!

The next workshop is on the 17th June at Dunbar Way Community Garden, North Gosford. Call Lynn for details and to RSVP on 4324 7617.



Property Council of Australia Finalist

We are very excited to be nominated as a finalist for the Property Council of Australia's Innovation and Excellence Awards! Our development at Glendale, which was completed in December 2019, is in the running under the Best Affordable Housing category.

'Pacific Gateway' is a 21 unit development built in partnership with Kingston Building that provides a mix of social, affordable and private market rentals. It was built as part of the NSW Government's Communities Plus Project which redevelops older housing stock into more fit-for-purpose accommodation.

We are extremely proud of this nomination and look forward to the announcement in August this year. Fingers crossed!



Are you receiving Tenant Email Updates? If not, let us know at events@pacificlink.org.au